



Testimony for Housing Committee  
Tuesday, February 28, 2023  
Ashley Blount, Executive Director

I write to express support for **HB 6780, HB 6781 & SB 4**.

Black Infinity Collective practices liberation and honors the fluidity of ourselves and the movement. We are invested in the survival and nourishment of all Black people through care and healing. One of the ways we display our care for community in tangible ways is by offering Community grants for rental deposits and first month rent payments. Over time we have seen the amount needed by community members increase by thousands of dollars in order to move into apartments around the state and this does not include application fees.

We utilize a large part of our budget to do this because we know that when residents have stable housing, it is easier to maintain personal wellness. We know that when residents are paying more than 25% of their monthly income towards rent, they are considered rent burdened.

CT data in 2021 conducted a study about evictions in our state it was found that out of the 56% of females evicted in 2021 62% of those women identified as Black. I represent, I am the folks who are impacted at the greatest rate in this state. I too have my personal story of facing housing and security as rent continues to increase and wages remain the same. Still, as an employed person making what is deemed a livable wage, it is still not affordable for me to live on my own in this state.

Eviction records are indeed Anti Black. While apartment hunting, it was brought to my attention that I had a housing record that was haunting me from 5 years ago. It was a case that was thrown out and did not result in an actual eviction. However, due to my housing record the apartments we were shown were less than subpar, broken stairways, rooms filled with supplies,

broken furniture, and I think you get the point. It is a shame that we are making residents suffer and allow evictions to linger years after. Folks have very few options if they have an eviction record and generally it is not affordable, safe nor sustainable.

In CT there are provisions in place for low income residents, that keep on electricity and gas during the winter, because of the dangerous issues that could occur. It seems like a natural progression to add a winter eviction moratorium. Housing is a human right and eviction is a death sentence in frigid New England temperatures so we must act now. We are meeting at the intersection of health equity, environmental justice, and housing reform to create better outcomes for frontline communities.

Requesting the committee:

**Support HB 6780 - AN ACT CONCERNING TENANT'S RIGHTS**

**Support HB 6781 - AN ACT ADDRESSING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY FOR RESIDENTS IN THE STATE**

**Support SB 4 - AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S PRESENT AND FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS.**

Do not let the residents down this time around, we are still in a crisis. Put policy in place that will support the people.

Thank you for the opportunity.

Ashley Blount